

VZCZCXYZ0000  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSL #0087/01 0431744  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 121744Z FEB 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0677  
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY 0065  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA PRIORITY 0035  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0089

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000087

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/12/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [YI](#) [KOC](#) [LO](#)  
SUBJECT: FICO OPPOSES INDEPENDENCE FOR KOSOVO

Classified By: Pol-Econ Chief Debra Hevia for reason 1.4 b  
and d.

¶1. (C) Summary: While the SNS and SDKU 2/12 both introduced parliamentary resolutions opposing independence for Kosovo without the agreement of Serbia, Prime Minister Robert Fico made his true feelings known. Harking back to the Slovak public's opposition to NATO airstrikes in 1999, he reminded his voters of the innocent people killed by NATO bombs, and said independent status for Kosovo would be irresponsible. In an indirect slap to Foreign Minister Jan Kubis, Fico vowed to push through his viewpoint in the cabinet. Fico seems to have been provoked into this emotional response by his political rival Dzurinda. But some of this outburst may have been for show. Kubis' chief of staff told us 2/12 that Gasparovic, Fico, and Kubis met the evening of 2/9 to coordinate policy, and that the MFA had flexibility at GAERC. He downplayed the domestic politicking, but emphasized that parliament should not tie Slovakia's hands in the UNSC. We will continue engaging members of all parties in parliament to retract or tone down the "binding" resolution idea. We will also encourage Slovak NGOs with experience in Kosovo to raise their voices in the debate. End summary.

#### Parties Demand Parliamentary Resolution on Kosovo

¶2. (U) The furor over potential Kosovo independence invoked by Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari's proposal continues among Slovakia's main political parties. Foreshadowing the Prime Minister's position, during weekend TV debates Culture Minister Marek Madaric said "it would be a complete precedent if we gave an ethnic minority...the right to its independence. If Ahtisaari's proposal for the future status of Kosovo recommends independence, Smer will reject it." Chair of Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee Boris Zala (Smer) said "Smer has claimed since the beginning that independence for Kosovo is the worst solution. Kosovo independence would lead towards the destabilization of all of Europe." Opposition Christian Democrat Movement (KDH) chair Pavol Hrusovsky echoed the sentiment, saying no solution concerning the future status of Kosovo would be acceptable without Serbian agreement.

¶3. (U) On 2/12, both Jan Slota's Slovak National Party (SNS) and Mikulas Dzurinda's Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU) presented draft resolutions on Kosovo in parliament. SDKU called for a binding resolution that would limit the ability of the foreign minister to negotiate, including in the UNSC, for an independent Kosovo state without the agreement and against the will of Serbia. SNS toned down the language of its original proposal at the request of coalition partner Smer, but it too rejected independence for Kosovo against the will of the Serbian state.

14. (C) Former Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan of SDKU told the Ambassador 2/9 that Dzurinda's harsh statements against possible Kosovo independence were his own initiative, not a demand from the party membership. He explained that sometimes Dzurinda gets an idea in his head that is hard to dislodge, but he also expressed his belief that there was a way to bring Dzurinda around to a position that would more closely mirror our own. The Ambassador is seeking a meeting with Dzurinda to discuss this issue.

#### Fico Lets Loose

-----

15. (U) Responding to a question on Kosovo at a 2/12 press conference, Prime Minister Robert Fico rejected the idea of Kosovo independence, and said Slovakia could only agree with a solution which is "reparable." Taking the country back to the emotional outcry against NATO airstrikes in 1999, he asked why Dzurinda was complaining about Kosovo now when his government had allowed NATO airplanes free flight over Slovakia...knowing full well that the airplanes would not be carrying leaflets but bombs. This resulted in 3,000 dead civilians, women, old people, children, and these were just the official numbers. He repeated this message emotionally several times, saying Dzurinda and Kukan should be silent on behalf of those victims.

16. (U) Fico continued that independent status for Kosovo would be irresponsible and would lead to uncontrolled moves in other countries. Belgrade and Pristina should negotiate an agreement, rather than have the issue decided by international dictate. He claimed that his opinion has not changed; he has been saying the same thing for the last half year (since taking office). He insisted this would be his position in the cabinet, and he would push it through. Maybe the international community has different views, but Fico vowed to maintain his. Regarding the SNS declaration in parliament, Fico merely noted that the next session is in March so there is plenty of time to discuss the issue.

#### MFA Not Overly Concerned

-----

17. (C) FM Kubis' Chief of Staff told PolEcChief late 2/12 that Gasparovic, Fico, and Kubis had a policy coordination meeting 2/9 on Kosovo, and that Kubis had gone to GAERC with flexibility. He said the domestic political debate was letting off steam, but so far Fico had not issued Kubis instructions to change the MFA's policy stance. Kubis feels he can control the situation and persuade the government. The danger, in his view, is the binding resolution threatened by Dzurinda. Kubis sought the Ambassador's help 2/9 "to prevent parliament from tying my hands at the UNSC." Kubis plans to give an interview to leading daily Pravda on 2/13 to "explain" the GAERC conclusions on Serbia and Kosovo to the Slovak public. He will also speak at the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (thinktank) on 2/13 to present an overview of Slovak foreign policy.

18. (C) Comment: Fico seems to have been provoked yet again by his archrival Dzurinda into sharp rhetoric which boxes him into a corner regarding future options. Fico told the Ambassador January 29 that Slovakia would not stand alone against EU consensus. Although Fico's public comments seem unretractable, the MFA seems optimistic that the domestic debate will die down and Kubis eventually will be free to maneuver as a responsible member of the international community. We will intensely engage politicians in all parliamentary parties to try to pull back the idea of a binding parliamentary resolution. We will also encourage NGOs with activities in Kosovo to add their voices to the public debate.